



Kalimpong

*Vol. 4 • Issue 7 August 2013 Rs. 10/-

HIMALAYAN TIMES

**CONNECTING
WITH THE
MAINSTREAM**

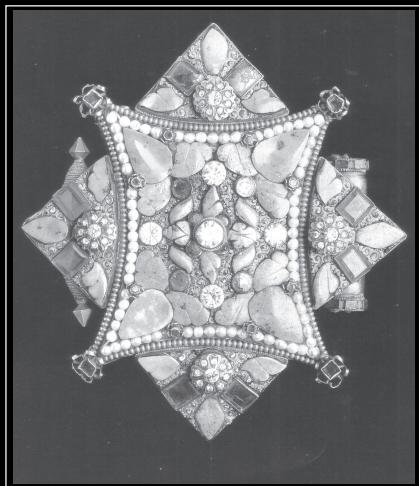
***ROTTING TIMES**

***FOOTBALL:
KALIMPONG STYLE**

***URGEN LAMA(MIND
THE POCKET DYNAMITE**



**YOUNGHUSBAND
EXPEDITION TO
TIBET**



Bhrgunath Singh Jewellers

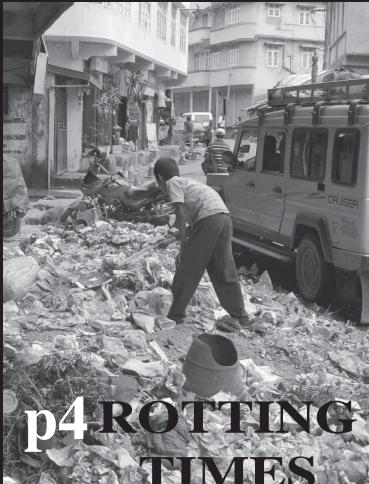
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Kalimpong, sister to the Queen of the Hills, stinks more like her horse stable than her sister.. writes Sandip C. Jain

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Publisher:

Himalayan Sales, Main Road, Kalimpong
Printers:

Mani Printing Press, R.C.Mintri Road,
Kalimpong

Design & Computer:

Vivek Tamang

Marketing:

Anuj Pradhan

Circulation:

Chitra Basnet

**RNI Regd. No. 5075 of
01.01.1957**

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www.himalayantimes.co.in

www.kalimpongkalimpong.blogspot.com

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Longfellow's "village blacksmith" and Bhanubhakta's "ghansi" (grass-cutter) both seem to have somewhere somehow emphasized how an ordinary man and his life can show a good example of hard work and achievement.. writes Dipendra Raya Chettri



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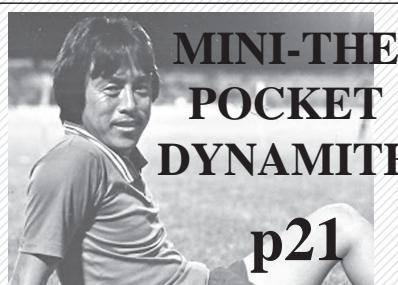
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Sandip C. Jain

ROTTING TIMES

Kalimpong, sister to the Queen of the Hills, appears to be stinking more like her horse stable than her sister.

Do you have a can of room spray lying around at home or wherever you are at this moment, reading this piece??? If you do have it then please spray it, in ample quantity, before you start reading because chances are that the stench would be so repulsive by the time you finish reading this, that you could take out, from the wrong side, whatever you may have had in your last meal, all over this issue of Himalayan Times, that is in your hands at the instant.

But then, if you live in the Kalimpong Municipal area, in these stinking times, chances are high that you have already gotten used to the stench that filters in through your windows, from the garbage dump across the street. The horrid odor that follows you around everywhere in Kalimpong seems omnipresent. There is no escaping it. It follows you around like as though one was taking a stroll inside a pig sty. Of course, no one in his/her right mind would take a stroll inside a pig sty but then we in Kalimpong are probably not in our right minds considering the fact that despite the foul odor and heaps of garbage everywhere, we still have a smile in our faces.

Kalimpong, sister to the Queen of the Hills, appears to be stinking more like her horse stable than her sister.

Of course, we have no one to blame but ourselves. We seem to have invited ourselves into this predicament in the first place. The word Democracy is probably the only thing in the Hills today which equals in stench, the garbage dumps of this town. The much maligned word has been degraded beyond redemption now. But then, we live in the largest democracy in the world and the Government we elect is supposed to be “By the people, of the people and for the people”, which means we are to blame for all the rot in sight and smell.



Photo: Munesh Sharma

The story of the stench in Kalimpong has a long history, one that toppled a Municipal Board and one which created a situation where the century old dumping ground in Kalimpong lost out to real estate interests. The funny part is that it was done by people who claim to be working in the interest of the farming community. How the farmers have benefited from the rotting garbage in our streets is beyond the little grey matter I have beneath the fast balding cranium box of mine. Their argument at that time was that the old dumping ground was affecting the hygiene of the residents in the vicinity. But Pray, who gave them the permission to build houses next to the century old garbage dump???



Photo: Sandip C. Jain

One thing that the issue did at that time (2008) was that the then existing Municipal board in Kalimpong, controlled by the Gorkha National Liberation Front was toppled by one which owed allegiance to the newly formed Gorkha Janamukti Morcha.

. That was about it- the politics over our garbage was complete and the rot had set in and the stench of it is now stronger than ever.

The following years saw a new Municipal Board being elected and we the people lived in high expectation that now a new system would be put in place to tackle the waste disposal problem being faced by the town- but it has been a wait in vain till now. The rotting garbage heaps grew in size and the putrefying garbage emitted stench more than ever before. With no place to dump the growing garbage heaps, road side garbage dumps became the reason for people to avoid coming to town. The new board, started to sink into the same garbage heaps that their political bosses had used to climb onto the Municipal Chairman's Chair.

To be fair to the current Municipal Board, they have tried their “stinking” best to find a solution to this dire problem but the fact is that their hands are already too dirty to clean up the mess. They tried dumping the garbage into the Teesta at Mellie, Kirnay, Teesta and other places facing opposition from the local populace at each of the places. They then tried to dump it below the Army cantonment; the locals once again came out against it. They tried dumping it at a new dumping ground below lower Bhalukop- Nature foiled it with landslides. Would you believe this??? They even tried keeping the garbage hidden at the basement of a building next to the Municipal Office. But the fact is that the problem grew with each new day.

Along with the garbage heaps- rats, other rodents, flies, mosquitoes and I am sure serious disease causing bacteria too are growing day after day and if this continues, the day is not too far off when some serious epidemic will break out in Kalimpong. It is a smelly business trying to fix responsibilities here- who will be responsible in such an eventuality- the current Municipality?? The former municipal board ?? Our Political bosses?? The organization which orchestrated the movement to stop dumping in the century old dumping ground?? The Civil Administration??? Or us the people ??? I presume it will be us the smelly creatures who will have to take the blame again- after all it is us who contributed to the growing garbage heaps.

Let's just hope that the current Municipal Board does not get sucked too deep into this smelly mess.. 



OPINION

NEELKAMAL
CHETTRI



CONNECTING WITH THE MAINSTREAM

Tea garden, Cinchona and Forest village society face immense challenges as they aspire to connect with the mainstream India – educationally, economically and socially.

As the Indian Democracy has started maturing the time has come to analyse the Indian mind and the different influences, it has had over the centuries. These influences can be imagined in three overlapping concentric circles. Firstly, the native Hindu experience, the experience of Islam and finally to the experience of imperialism.

The last Lok Sabha election has shown that finally India as Nation State has started to move away from fighting the experience of Islam and towards fighting the experience of colonialism. The Collapse of the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Congress in Uttar Pradesh is a very significant case in point in the maturing of our democracy. Today development in terms of physical, social human and economic capital is getting to be more important to the Indian Voters especially to the young Indian.

In Darjeeling the templates between ideas belonging to colonial India is clashing with the ideas of post colonial India.

The other issue that is being challenged is that India after Independence followed the policy of reservation of communities – scheduled caste, scheduled tribes and

other backward communities in employment, education and in Municipal, State and Lok Sabha Seats .

It was believed that social and economic emancipation of the oppressed caste and tribes would automatically follow based on this policy.

Unfortunately this policy has been successful selectively. In terms of political capital it has been very successfully.

Unfortunately this success has not translated into the holistic development. Even though the entire region is rich in natural capital, tribal's in the heartland of India have not been beneficiaries of this immense wealth. The Naxalite movement in the heartland of India is the interesting case in point which is challenging the reservation based paradigm.

Even after 62 years of Indian Independence the socio-economic educational levels of the tribal's in the naxalite infested areas of India have remained the same. Outside the Naxalite areas, in mainstream India there has been phenomenal development in each and every sphere.

The tribal's have remained as they were, in the mindset of hunter-gatherers unable to benefit from the rich environmental resources of the area.

Mainstream India like the British considered anything native as backward and primitive. Unfortunately the tribal's in the heartland have decided that violence is the way to rectify this glaring inequity imbalance.

The key reason for this has been that India as a post-colonial nation state till date has not yet attempted to understand the impact of British imperialism and its ideas as a Post-colonial Nation state especially on the natural resource rich areas.

Colonial and Post-colonial appropriation of people's right and management of their rich environmental resources- tea gardens and the forests being the prime example has led to troubled times for the people living in these areas.

The down slide continues and there is little effort to modify the development process that will bring it into greater harmony with the needs of the people especially the very poor or maintain ecological stability while increasing the productivity of the land, water and forest resources of the region.

In the case of plantation society and its economy, India as a postcolonial nation state has become – itself a conformity producing prism house which has revised and merely replicated, the old colonial division of social and economic consciousness. As a nation it has not been able to deal with economic, social disparities and inequities of the plantation society.

The key issue is on ideas. How do the planners/ policy makers of India that is becoming economically richer by the day transform the existing plantation model developed in 1850's at the height of British Imperialism to reduce the growing social, educational and economic in-equity in the plantation society?

The pursuit of profit, the building of the Empire and social apartheid together created the tea plantation



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industry of Darjeeling, Dooars and Terai. This tea plantation model was developed on the much maligned economic and social theory based on exploitation – of the land, environment and the lesser or subject races. Spaces in the plantation were meticulously charted, spoken for, inhabited by a hierarchy of master- subject personages. Unfortunately this plantation model has remained the same.

The International Labor Organization has been instrumental in developing ideas on the plantation systems. The ILO has primarily focused and published working papers on:-

1. Factors effecting the productivity of the tea-field and bush.
2. On productivity and improvement and Labor Relations in the Tea Industry of South Asia.

In the tea plantation systems, the structure and labour force has been determined largely by historical factors and by the characteristics of the crop produces in a mono culture environment. A feature of the early development of the tea plantation systems in India was the importation of a sizeable labour force from outside the

region. This imported labour was settled on plantation lands and permanency of employment was almost by definition, a distinctive mark of these systems. It further ensures that all the socio-economic needs of the resident garden society were the responsibility of the plantation system.

This plantation model nurtured a master – slave environment which over the years has created a plantation culture of dependency and poverty amongst the plantation society. For generations the children born in the plantation lands have rarely got the opportunity to move out from the social and economic class they are born into.

All these ILO studies were based on the premise that increased productivity would directly improve the socio-economic conditions of the resident tea garden society and thereby the resident garden economy.

Unfortunately this was not so and not even various ILO studies gave inkling to the devastating effect the sudden closure of the tea plantation would have on the resident garden society and the immense socio-economic problems and challenges that followed. Famine struck the closed plantation estate and people died of starvation.

Since Independence there has been a total institutional failure of the respective State and Central Governments in delivering social and economic empowerment to the people living in the plantation areas of Darjeeling Dooars and Terai region of Bengal.

The State Government of West Bengal has failed totally in developing and integrating the plantation societies. They are only interested in collecting the revenues from the region and to maintain their political and cultural hegemony. Even the deaths in the closed and abandoned tea gardens due to starvation and hunger failed to move them. Their lack of progressive and humane policies has further alienated the peace loving people living in these areas.

Surprisingly even the various Central government rural development schemes and policies seem to bypass them.

The Plantation Business Model and Plantation System now needs a comprehensive dismantling of colonial hierarchies and structures which needs to be matched by a reformed and imaginative re-conception of the colonized plantation society and culture.

It further requires an enlightened intellectual consensus which refuses the short term blandishments of separatist and triumphalist slogan in favor of the larger, more generous human realities of community among cultures, people and societies.

In other words, the stirring of independent and modern India can only be properly realized when the nation becomes more critical of itself. For this to happen the nation has to prove itself finally capable of directly attention to the abused rights of all oppressed classes especially the plantation society.



The State Government of West Bengal has failed totally in developing and integrating the plantation societies. They are only interested in collecting the revenues from the region and to maintain their political and cultural hegemony. Even the deaths in the closed and abandoned tea gardens due to starvation and hunger failed to move them. Their lack of progressive and humane policies has further alienated the peace loving people living in these areas.

Since Independence the tea plantation industry of the region has created immense wealth which played a major role in the development of the nation. Very little of this wealth has trickled down to the plantation workers and their families. On the contrary only menial jobs are available in the plantations.

There has always been a huge transfer of wealth away from the plantations and rarely has this surplus profit been re-invested into the plantations or its people who work there.

One of the main challenges facing the industry, especially tea plantations is outmigration and chronic absenteeism of registered, resident plantations workers, a general aversion to the plantation labour in the villages, and the newly educated generation's disappointment on dignity of the job and their desire for a more fulfilling life outside the tea sector. The reasons are primarily a quest for better wages and status, but also better educational opportunities, access to child and medical care, more off-work time and amenities for leisure, and self-esteem, dignity and social acceptance. To address this issue, workers and their families need to be empowered.

There is already a distinct lack of job security in tea plantations as even permanent workers' wages are paid on a daily rate just for the days worked, so that workers cannot be sure of a steady income. Job insecurity is also due to variance in work according to the season.

This problem is compounded by the trend towards a reduction in permanent employment and an increase in casual labour, who are employed on a seasonal basis on many estates to cope with peaks of production. Although casual workers receive the same wage, they are not entitled to any benefit enjoyed by the permanent workers. Not only do they have no job security, the temporary workers are not entitled to subsidised foodgrains, medical facilities, housing facilities, firewood, dry tea, protective

clothing, etc. The women workers are not entitled to maternity benefits and the children cannot study in garden schools.

One needs to note here that wage is a very permanent worker perspective yet they constitute 20% of plantation worker percentage. Thus 80% of the plantation workers do not feature in the wage debate. Yet without them the plantation does not run, thus the wage discussion will need to include the entire resident garden community.

Casual workers are also excluded from the legislative rights of permanent workers, such as the provisions of the Plantation Labour Act in India. Under the PLA, there is no category of 'casual workers'. As such, they have no rights and are unable to claim benefits or have access to the various Central Government rural development schemes.

All of this has led to massive social unrest in the tea growing areas and created economic slaves with no access to the burgeoning mainstream Indian economy.

The Kannan Devi Hills Produce Company is being touted as an interesting new plantation model which finally gives the workers the sense of ownership and the space that they have been denied for generations. This has led to a marked improvement in the financial condition of the company. This has been possible as the workers have leveraged on the sense of their new found ownership. It has led to higher morale which had had a dramatic impact on the productivity and on the primary sale revenues of the company.

The challenge will be to contemporize the existing colonial plantation model into one that is in sync with new emerging and fast developing India who is economically confident of its place in the world economic order. Today India is offering immense economic and employment opportunities to its citizens to uplift itself from the social and economic class it was born into. Unfortunately the entire tea plantation society is being



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left behind and unable to uplift from that very same social and economic class they are born into.

In the plantation society of future, all the rural development schemes initiated by the Central Government have to be implemented so that workers and their dependents of the plantation society get the opportunity for their livelihood and income generations that people from other rural communities are benefitting presently.

A new development strategy must create ownership space either through including land rights stakeholder participation for the tea plantation workers that will therefore improve the economic access of the resident garden society; ensure that its proposed solutions are conducive to local milieus and are efficient in welfare-terms rather than merely in productivity terms, and that these bring economic productions into closer consonance with the natural ecosystems. In practice, such solutions demand social innovation by re-orienting economic activity towards human development rather than towards technological developments. Implementation of rural development schemes. Such innovation comprises the integration of formal with informal activity, proper utilization of resources and most importantly institutional responsiveness and adoption of technology appropriate to mountain areas where these tea gardens are located.

Today the resident garden society wants to mainstream with the India in terms of education, jobs, and the other aspects that our maturing democracy offers to its citizens..

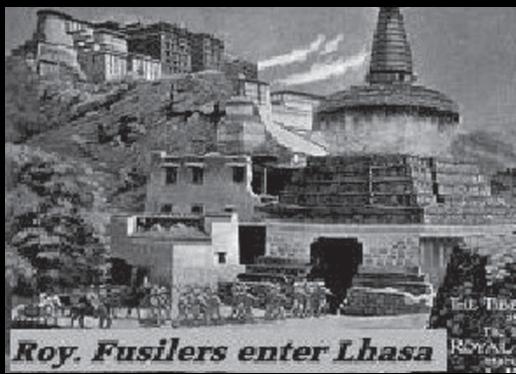
The time has come to contemporize the existing colonial plantation model and all the legislations that govern the tea plantations which will finally give them the socio-economic space denied from the time the plantations were developed in the 1850's and mainstream the economically enslaved - enclave plantation society with the fast growing Indian economy.



Francis Younghusband



*Potola Castle
Lhasa
Tibet*



Roy. Fusiliers enter Lhasa

YOUNGHUSBAND EXPEDITION TO TIBET

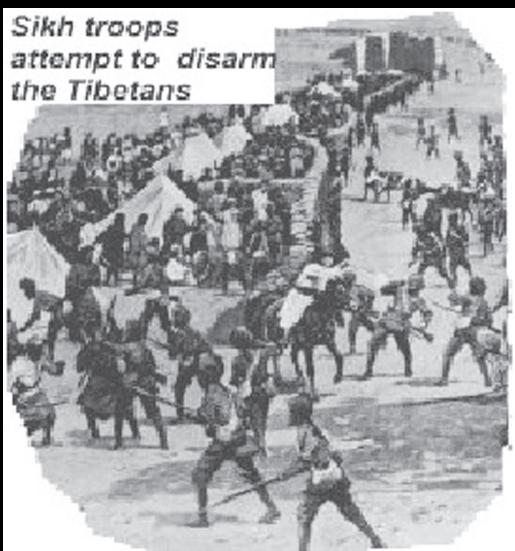
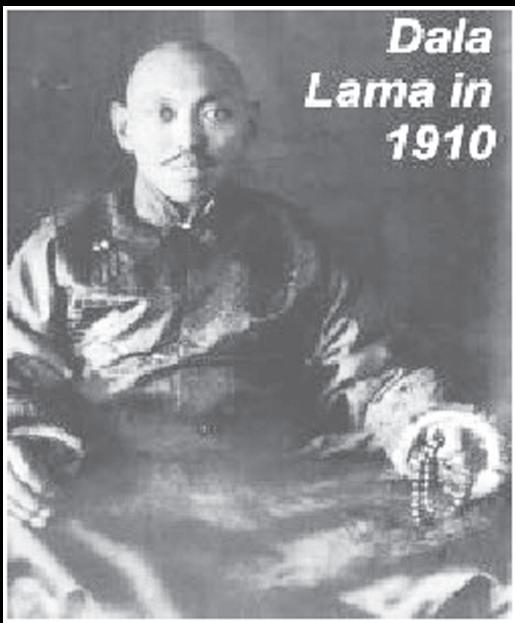
In 1901 and more strongly in 1902, Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India, heard rumours that seemed to justify his fears about Russian intervention on the north-east frontier of India with Tibet. The Russian government was supposedly sending agents and arms to the mysterious country up in the mountains.

There was nothing apparently to be done about this. Tibet lay nominally under the suzerainty of China, a power then so decrepit that it was unable to enforce its rights. When the British protested to China, they were apt to be told that the Tibetans were out of control. Conversely, when dealing with the Tibetan officials one was advised that all dealings should be through the Chinese government. At the end of 1902 the Viceroy tried to bring the issue to a conclusion. There was, exceptionally an adult Dalai Lama, the ruler of Tibet with whom business should be done; (normally Dalai Lamas were chosen as young boys and a regent was appointed until they were 18. It was frequently the case that the regent would be reluctant to hand over power and Dalai Lamas were inclined to die for one reason or another before reaching the crucial age).

Russia Protests - Scope of Mission Curbed. Whispers of a British intention to move into Tibet began to circulate in Europe. Russia protested; and members of the Cabinet, especially Prime Minister Arthur Balfour, were reluctant to do anything that would estrange Britain further from Russia. The most that the Cabinet would do was authorize talks with Chinese and Tibetan representatives, for the purpose of discussing certain minor border incidents involving herdsmen and their yaks. The two sides were to meet just on the Tibetan side of border. Curzon appointed Francis Younghusband, explorer, mystic, newspaper correspondent and student of religions, to lead the mission.

There was already a clear difference of purpose between the Government of India and the Government in London: the former wished to obtain a new treaty and the means to ensure its observance, the latter wished to obtain reparation for the border incidents and retreat without loss of face.

The Dalai Lama had fled to outer Mongolia, also a Buddhist country. Younghusband therefore had to negotiate with priests of the Buddhist hierarchy. The terms of the treaty which he eventually



signed were very different from - and politically more dangerous than - those the home government had authorized.

The convention kept foreign agents out of Tibet and was the first occasion when Britain and Tibet had established direct relations. The Tibetans were to make a reality of previous agreements signed in 1890 and 94, but not observed, to allow trade marts.

Terms of Treaty with Tibet. They were to pay reparations for the border incidents over 75 years (instead of the three years that the cabinet in London had thought suitable) and the British were to occupy a tongue of border territory called the Chumbi Valley as a security.

There was good reason for Younghusband's mission which, on the whole was conducted with distinction and determination. It was also a prime example of the way in which a mere hint of Russian action could lead the British into international embarrassments. There is no evidence that Russia ever made any serious attempt to control Tibet; she had no claim, and little opportunity to intervene there; but the British were prepared to pay a considerable price to keep her out.

The Younghusband expedition was the "last throw of the dice in the GREAT GAME".

Though always listening for a whisper of Russian influence in Afghanistan, the British had never worried about Russians in Tibet. But then, in 1901, disturbing rumours reached India about Russian penetration into the remote priest-ruled land.

As a result Colonel Francis Younghusband was given command of a mission to Tibet in 1903. Its ostensible purpose was to clear up trade and border disputes : in fact it was meant to counteract Russian influence. This ill-fated expedition, shackled by London's hesitation about advancing and unable to locate either the ruler of Tibet (Dalai Lama) or any Russians, achieved only a treaty that quickly lapsed.

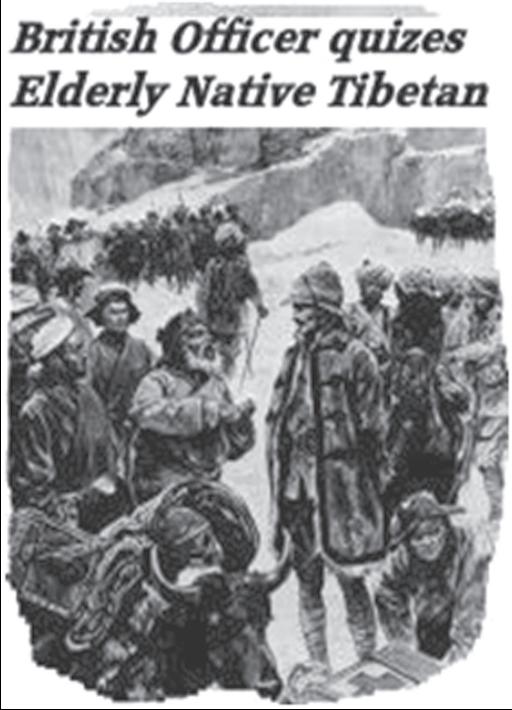
Stalemate at Khamba Jong. In 1901, strange reports began filtering out of Tibet concerning the friendship between a mysterious Mongol named Agvan Dorjeff, Russian by nationality, with the Dalai Lama, the ruler of Tibet.

The Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon, was convinced that a demonstration of British power should be staged. Finally, London agreed, but anxious to avoid offending Russia, insisted that the mission led by Sir Francis Younghusband should go only as far as Khamba Jong.

Khamba Jong was just inside Tibet. On July 19th, Younghusband was to negotiate with the Tibetans and their nominal overlords the Chinese, but only about frontier questions and not about the Russians.

Younghusband's mission reached Khamba Jong on July 7 and settled down to await the Tibetan and Chinese delegates. They made friends with the local inhabitants, and Younghusband spent long hours with a high-ranking abbot, the Panchen Lama, who took much trouble patiently explaining that the world was flat. No other official came.

Massacre of the Willing Victims. In the autumn of 1903, the Tibetans arrested two, very minor spies from the town of Lachung, just across the Indian border in Sikkim. The incident was just what Curzon needed



to persuade London that the intransigent Tibetans needed teaching a lesson.

London agreed with him and preparations were made for a further advance, using force if necessary. However the march was sanctioned only as far as Gyantse, and not, as Curzon had wished, to the capital Lhasa, 100 miles farther on through the mountains.

Younghusband's mission was expanded into a full scale military force consisting of about 1,200 British and Indian soldiers, four artillery pieces and two Maxim guns, 16,000 pack animals and 10,000 coolies. By early December, it was poised at the Jelap La Pass, the 14,000 foot entrance into Tibet the "roof of the world". To the hazards of travel over some of the roughest and highest terrain in the world, was added sub-zero winter cold.

Conditions were frightful: The soldiers wrote home in pencil, since their ink froze. Rifle-bolts froze into the breaches, and subalterns kept the Maxims bolts warm in their own beds. The troops' clothing, though lavish by the standards of those days, offered no real protection and was, in addition, too bulky to allow free movement for firing. Yet, although scouts kept reporting that they had sighted large Tibetan forces in the hills, Younghusband was not attacked. It was not until the two opposing forces reached the tiny village of Guru on March 31st, 1904, that they came into direct conflict.

On The Roof of the World: Some kind of engagement at Guru was inevitable. Two thousand Tibetan troops were waiting there, blocking the caravan trail, which the British had to follow if they were to get to Gyantse. On March 31, 1904, the British reached the Tibetan fortifications.

The Tibetan general galloped up and told them to withdraw. Younghusband replied giving them 15 minutes to clear the way. A quarter of an hour passed, and nothing happened. Then, slowly the troops advanced until they were covering the Tibetans at point-blank range. Officers were taking photographs and the Daily Mail correspondent was already scribbling a dispatch describing a bloodless victory when Younghusband ordered the Sikhs to disarm the Tibetans. As the two forces wrestled with each other, the situation began to turn ugly. Then the Tibetan general fired a shot. Fighting broke out instantly. Volley after volley of British bullets crashed into the solid mass of Tibetans.

The Maxims chattered vindictively. A young officer wrote home that night "I got so sick of the slaughter that I ceased to fire".

Worse still, the Tibetans did not flee. They walked slowly away, heads bowed, ignoring the bullets that continued to mow them down until nearly 900 were lying dead and wounded on the field. The British had six minor casualties.

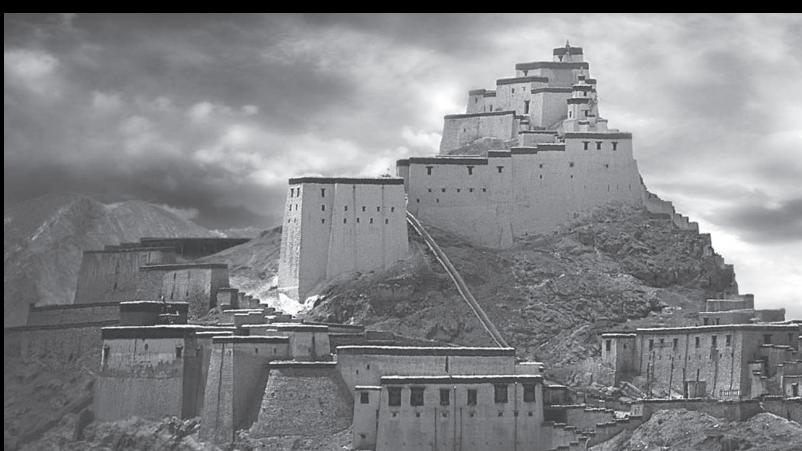
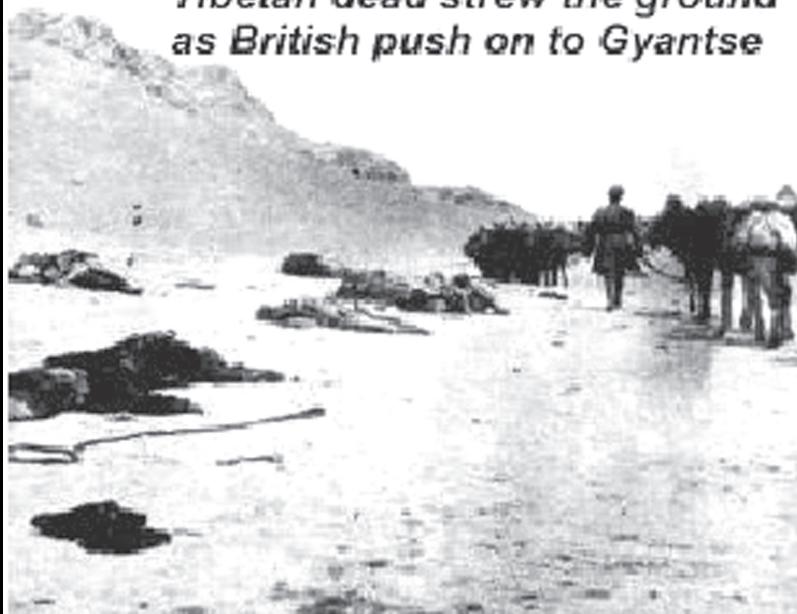
Dead - End, at the Forbidden City: After the massacre at Guru, the British continued to Gyantse. There they waited, as at Khamba Jong, for the non-existent delegates.

Finally the Tibetans attacked fiercely. Younghusband managed to beat them off, and then he had a good pretext to continue to Lhasa, known as the "forbidden city" since so few Europeans had passed its walls.



Panchen Lama (2nd highest lama) comes to visit

**Tibetan dead strew the ground
as British push on to Gyantse**



Grudgingly, the home government agreed to his proposals. The expedition marched on until it reached the plains before the city of Lhasa. Here Younghusband learned that the Dalai Lama had fled to Outer Mongolia.

When the British entered the city on August 2nd, they were in turn awed by the magnificence of the great golden citadel, the Potola, and disgusted by Lhasa's squalor.

As it happened the last stages of the advance took place without serious resistance and through smiling country. One day in early August the mission entered a pleasant valley of trees and cornfields. On a small hill they saw, iridescent in the sunlight, the golden roofs and pinnacles of the Potola Palace, home and sanctuary of the Dalai Lama. Younghusband, followed by Chinese and British soldiers, marched through the heart of Lhasa, the first Britishers to do so since the time of Warren Hastings. The Tibetans looked on with apparent apathy. They showed no sign of bitter hostility to the mission and indeed, in Younghusband's words, did not seem to "Care a tuppenny damn whether we went there or not".

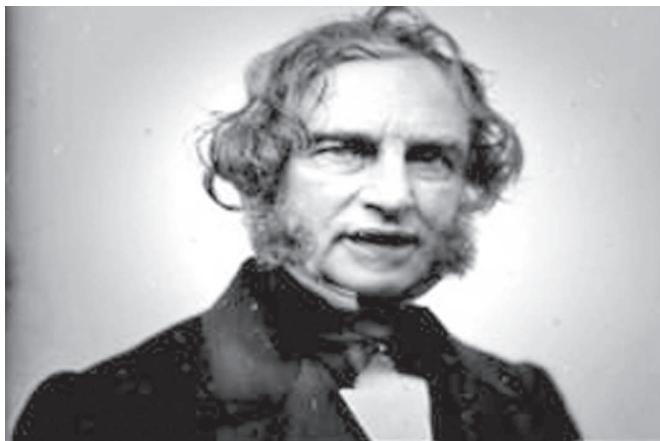
The Russians naturally complained. The home government insisted that some of these terms be altered at once, not least because they believed that it was supremely important to behave well towards the Russians. Although the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 was raging at that moment, Russia was still extending her railways right up to the frontiers with Afghanistan and rumoured to be moving troops in central Asia. The British government was in a distinctly shaky position and anyway nearing the end of its term in office.

Negotiations dragged on while the soldiers organized gymkhana and football matches at their camp to pass the time. An agreement was signed at last in the Potala Palace on September 7th, but it was a hollow victory for Younghusband. He had gone looking for Russians and had found none. And the agreement giving the British great trading concessions was quickly repudiated by a nervous home government, sensitive about Russian reactions. ■



Dipendra Raya Chettri

A LIGHTER MOMENT WITH LONGFELLOW AND BHANUBHAKTA



Born in different places, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow the great American poet on 27th February 1807 in the city of Portland, Maine, then part of Massachusetts and Adikavi Bhanubhakta Acharya in 1814 A.D. (1871 B.S.) in Chundi Ramgha, Tanahu District of Nepal, both seem to have somewhere somehow emphasized how an ordinary man and his life can show a good example of hard work and achievement. Yes I am talking about Longfellow's "village blacksmith" and Bhanubhakta's "ghansi" (grass-cutter). Both of them were inspired by their simple lives and work. As a result many great works have been produced by both the masters. In this way the literature they produced was simply unsurpassable.

The poem *The Village Blacksmith* by Longfellow itself is a recitation piece for children. In those days blacksmithing was an important part of American work. People also readily accepted the idealized view of the blacksmith. Longfellow also did the job of elevating the character of an ordinary man, the blacksmith who was created around the goals of ordinary people who would fulfill the American dream. While writing the poem he also made sure that the protagonist is not only hard working but also sincere and pious. From the poem we understand that the life of the blacksmith is a tragedy whose loving wife is dead. The blacksmith is not permitted to mourn continuously about his loss but has to keep his life busy by working hard. Hence the poet has written - *Thanks, thanks to thee my worthy friend, for the lesson thou hast taught.* In this way we all have to learn a lesson from the blacksmith's life.

Only a person who has closely watched a blacksmith at work could have written such a poem. In those days it was a joy to watch the blacksmith at work. The young people of today rarely enjoy to look at the work of the blacksmith, who is busy with his hammer. The smoke from the fire, collection of unique tools such as tongs, the horse shoe crowbars is surely not a pleasure for the youngsters of today. However the actual blacksmith in the poem was Dexter Pratt, who happened to be Longfellow's neighbour. Longfellow also pays his tribute to his ancestor Stephen Longfellow who also happened to be a blacksmith by writing the poem.

On the way to Harvard College the poet must have watched the blacksmith busy at his work and must have been inspired by his hard work. The blacksmith happens to be the role model, a common American worker who works hard, looks after the family and at the same time serves the community too.

Under a spreading chestnut-tree
 The village smithy stands;
 The smith, a mighty man is he,
 With large and sinewy hands;
 And the muscle of his brawny arms
 Are strong as iron hands.
 His hair is crisp, and black, and long,
 His face is like the tan;
 His brow is wet with honest sweat,
 He earns whate'er he can
 And looks the whole world in face,
 For he owes not any man.
 Week in, week out, from morn till night,
 You can hear his bellow blow;
 You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,
 With measured beat and slow,
 Like a sexton ringing the village bell,
 When the evening sun is low.

The very title of the poem has been presented as an “everyman” and the character of the blacksmith as an iconic tradesman. In short we can say the poem is a homiletic (a short poem with a moral message). One will only be rewarded through hard work.

Right from his childhood Longfellow had the zeal of learning and becoming a poet and had started reading poets as Cowper, Gray, Scott etc. At the tender age of six Longfellow went to the Portland Academy and later to Bowdoin College in Brunswick. He married Mary Storer Potter who passed away in Rotterdam in 1835 and later married Francis Elizabeth “Fanny”. He also accepted the Smith Professorship of Modern Languages at Harvard University but gave up teaching in 1854 and devoted his time

in writing. He has produced numerous works. Some of his important works include *Evangelin*, *Paul Revere's Ride*, etc. *The Song of Hiawatha* is one of his important works. *Ultima Thule* was dedicated to his friend George Washington Green which was published in 1880-

Ultima Thule! Utmost Isle!
 Here in thy harbors for a while
 We lower our sails; a while we rest
 From the unending, endless quest.

On the other hand Bhanubhakta encountered a *ghansi* who happened to tell him that he wanted to do something for the society so he would dig a well for the village people and would like to be remembered even after death. Bhanubhakta, who had received excellent education with special emphasis in religious texts, was astonished to hear such ideas from the poor grass-cutter. He was ashamed of himself of having done nothing in his life. After the conversation with the grass-cutter he wrote the following two verses:

Bhar janm ghans tir man diei dhan kamayo
 naam kyai rahos pachhi bhaner kuwa khanayo
 ghansi daridra gharko tar buddhi kasto
 mo bhanubhakta dhani bhai kan aaj yasto
 Mera inaar na ta sattal pati kyai chhan
 je dhan ra chijharu chhan ghar bhitra nai chhan
 tes ghansile kasari aaj diyechha arti
 dhikkar ho makan basnu na rakhi kirti

Bhanubhakta was so much influenced by the incident that he translated the Valmiki Ramayana from Sanskrit into Nepali. The original language of the Khas empire evolved into the present day Nepali was considered bastardized. At the same time in those days Sanskrit dominated the written texts. It was Bhanubhakta who popularized the written form of the Khas language. In this way he made the difficult epic comprehensible and readable to a wide range of Nepali people. In writing his great poetry he created a literary revolution by writing in the day to

day language of the people. His Ramayana was so lyrical that people remembered the whole volume by heart and people started singing it and took it as a song rather than a poem.

Motiram Bhatta a scholar, born in 1866 in Vosiko Tole of Kathmandu one day happened to hear the rhythmic recitation of Bhanubhakta's Ramayana. He was so much captivated to hear the verses that he started looking for his works. It was he who took the initiative to popularize the works of Bhanubhakta. Bhanubhakta's Ramayan was edited and published by him in 1887. He also wrote his biography and printed it in 1888. Motiram described Bhanubhakta as Adikavi in his biography not because he was the first poet in Nepali but he was the one to write with an understanding of *marma* or inner essence of poetry.

We can see the village blacksmith stand as a ideal figure of a hard working laborer and a model of the American worker which surely must have inspired not only Longfellow but the Americans as a whole. Minor incidents do play a vital role in our lives. It may prove to be a turning point in our lives too. But the story of the grass-cutter may be a subject to debate since the village did not practice selling or buying of grass. The idea of Motiram may be just to popularize Bhanubhakta. But surely he did a wonderful job of promoting Nepali literature and bringing to the forefront Bhanubhakta and his works. Bhanubhakta also composed beautiful poems such as the *Kantipuri Nagari*. His other works such as *Bhakta Mala*, *Badhu Sikhya* and *Prasnottar Mala* are also famous. He was not influenced by western literature. So we find a true Nepali flavor and aroma in his style of writing. That is why Ramayana by Bhanubhakta has remained immortal. In this way the idealism of the village blacksmith and the grass-cutter must have inspired the literary giants of English and Nepali, Longfellow and Bhanubhakta respectively.

HIMALAYAN HAZARD

Focus of an earthquake lies hidden beneath Darjeeling, says Abdul Matin

The devastating earthquake rocking India's northwestern border region focuses our attention to another danger zone in the East: Darjeeling.

Earthquake, one of nature's worst furies, arise due to some adjustments in the earth's outer shell called lithosphere. A proper understanding of those processes occurring underneath our feet is necessary if we are to avoid unimaginable losses of life and property.

In 2001, Professors Roger Bilham, Vinod K. Gaur and Peter Molnar pointed out in their research paper in the journal Science ('Himalayan Seismic Hazard') that "several lines of evidence show that one or more great earthquakes may be overdue in a large fraction of the Himalayas, threatening millions of people in that region."

According to them, six regions in the Himalayas have the potential to generate earthquake of a magnitude greater than 8. One of these high-risk zones lies in the Darjeeling range of the Himalayas. There is a possibility that parts of the Himalayas that have not been ruptured in major earthquakes for the last 500 to



Six regions in the Himalayas have the potential to generate earthquake of a magnitude greater than 8. One of these high-risk zones lies in the Darjeeling range of the Himalayas. There is a possibility that parts of the Himalayas that have not been ruptured in major earthquakes for the last 500 to 700 years will be associated with slip on faults

700 years will be associated with slip on faults (fractured surfaces on which earthquakes originate) exceeding 10 meters.

The Darjeeling-Sikkim range is seismically dangerous because it has not experienced any big earthquake in recorded history. Studies conducted for the past

several years by a team from the Centre for Mathematical Modelling and Computer Simulation of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research Centre (CSIR) suggest that strains are gradually accumulating in this region. According to Prof. Gaur, leader of the team, the area is ripe for a big earthquake. There is a possibility that a large amount of stored strain energy might be released, creating a devastating earthquake.

The structure of the Himalayas is characterised by fold-and-thrust belts containing a number of large faults separating gigantic sheets of rock masses. The sheets move southward because of the collisional effects of the Indian and Eurasian plates. The sheets move periodically, and during these movements accumulated strains are released in the form of earthquakes.

FOLLOW HIMALAYAN TIMES ON

FACEBOOK

The youngest fault in the Himalayan fold- and thrust belts, called the Main Frontal Thrust (MFT), which extends into the Indo-Gangetic planes in front of the Himalayans, is also likely to be very active seismically. Any substantial movement along this fault will release tremendous energy in the form of seismic waves.

Apart from the MFT, the other seismically active zones in front of the mountain range are the Malda-Kishanganj Fault, Katihar-Nail-phamari fault, Jangipur-Gaibanda Fault, Tista Fault, Dhubri Fault and a host of other unnamed faults between Kishanganj in the west and Alipurduar in the east. Some of these faults have become active only in recent times.

An earthquake in the southern part of Darjeeling-Sikkim will wreak a havoc, for it has one of the highest population densities in the world. The worst affected areas will be Siliguri, Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar and Alipurduar, not only because of their locations, but also due to the subsurface material on which these towns rest.

An earthquake of magnitude 7 or more in the area would make the alluvium and sand temporarily 'liquefied'. Buildings will topple or collapse automatically.

We should be prepared to tackle the problem of a big earthquake in the Darjeeling-Sikkim range. What is needed is a detailed plan of action. The government, town planners, and other civic bodies should chalk out strategies keeping in mind the seismicity of the area.

We must not delay in formulating a strict code in construction of buildings and high-rise structures. Development of new townships should follow the guidelines set by the Indian Bureau of Standards. Steps should also be taken to strengthen the existing vital structures and buildings such as schools, hospitals etc in the seismically active areas.

Only I have the duplicate keys to open the lock of Gorkhaland



**The Editor,
Himalayan
Times**

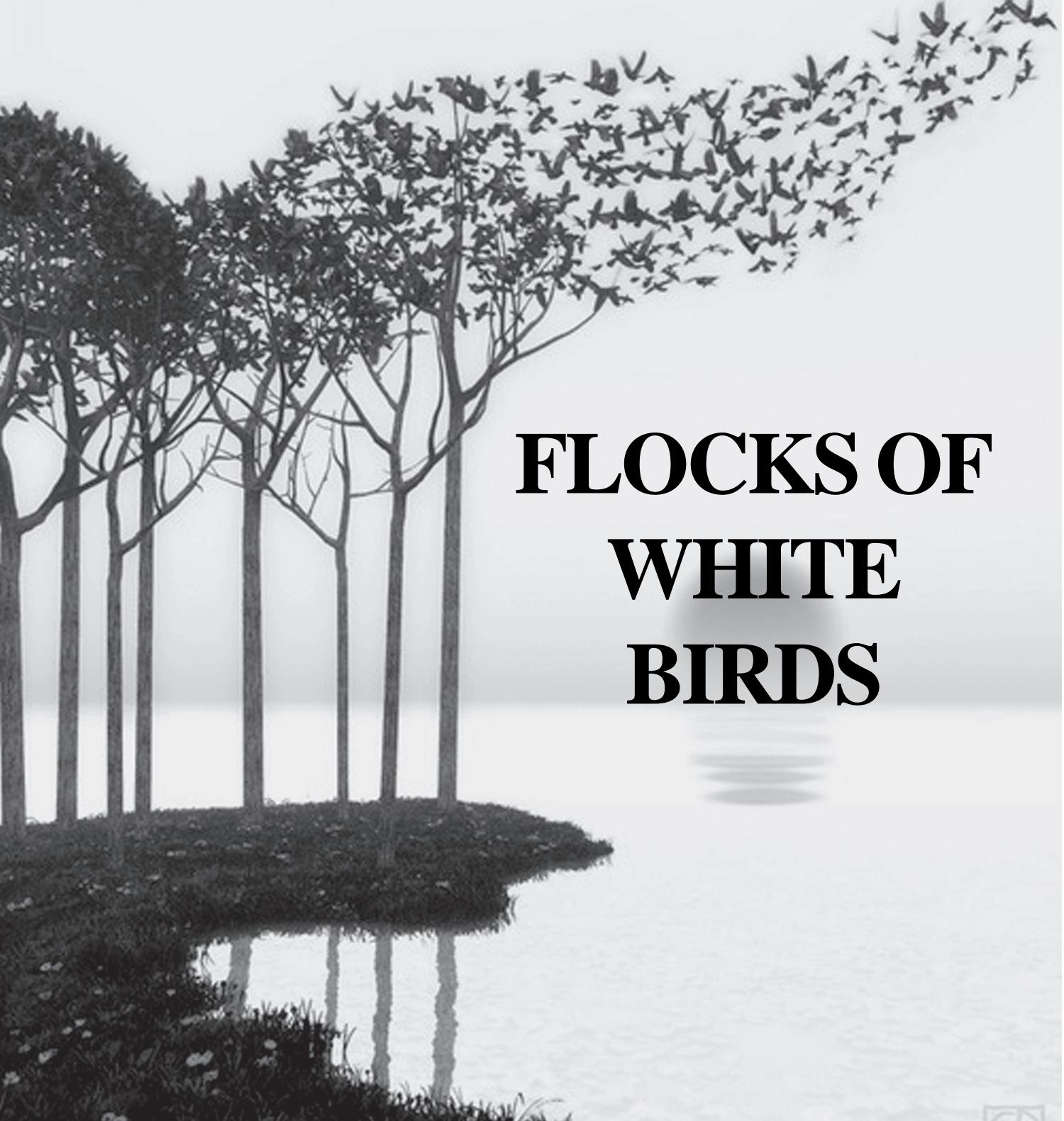


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LEPCHA
FOLK TALE



FLOCKS OF WHITE BIRDS

This Indian folktale is popular with the Lepcha tribe of Darjeeling and Sikkim. The Lepchas are a people who came to inhabit this region a long time ago. They settled down on the slopes of the great peak Kanchenjunga. The Lepchas call themselves Rong, which in their language means ‘the people of the valley’.

Like all tribal people of the world, the Lepchas love stories. In winter they gather around a fire and tell stories about a variety of topics - the creation of the world, the origin of the Lepcha people, the seasons and other natural phenomena and, of course, ghosts and demons. This story is very old. It comes from the Lepchas who originally settled in Sikkim and has been handed down by word of mouth from one generation to another.

The Lepcha people live on the slopes of the great Kanchenjunga and look upon the peak with great awe. They believe that Kanchenjunga is the home of Gods and spirits and therefore sacred. They also believe that, high up in the mountains behind the Kanchenjunga, there is a secret valley called Mayel. And in this valley live the ancestors of the Lepcha tribe. Hundreds of years have passed but these elders are still believed to be living at Mayel. And nobody can go there, for the way to Mayel is guarded by ferocious demons who will not let anyone through. Besides, the passage is blocked by a huge stone which cannot be removed by any man.

At one time these elders used to come down to the valley where the Lepchas live now. They mixed with the people and shared in their joys and sorrows. But they no longer do so because they feel that the new generations of Lepchas are not as good and pious as they should be. When the elders stopped coming, the Lepchas of the valley were very sad. They kept looking for their elders. For hundreds of years they looked but never found what they were looking for.

One day a brave young Lepcha was hunting in a remote forest when he came upon a stream. Floating down the stream was the branch of a tree. Instead of leaves it had beautiful blue-green needles, and the bark looked as though it was made of gold. The young man knew that there was no such tree growing in the valley. He thought that the branch must have come from Mayel and that it further meant that the tree lay somewhere upstream.

Leaving his bag of game on the forest floor and forgetting all about hunting, the young Lepcha began to climb up the mountain. He followed the path of the stream. So excited was he that he climbed for days and days but never got tired. In time he crossed the forest and a range of snow-covered mountains. After several more days he came to an open space at the heart of which lay a lake. Around the lake the young Lepcha saw a whole lot of white feathers and wondered to which bird they belonged. He pressed on and then, at long last, he reached a lush green valley surrounded by tall mountains. This was Mayel, the home of the Lepchas’ ancestors.

The sun was already setting when the young man reached the first house in the valley. He knocked at the stout wooden door and an old woman opened it. She took him in and offered him a rug to sit on. Then she brought him some hot water to wash -his feet. Later, when he was rested, she served a simple but satisfying meal of roasted grain, fruit and milk. The old woman was soon joined by an old man and the young Lepcha learned that the old couple lived all by themselves in that house. He learnt that the couple was childless.

The young Lepcha lay down on the rug and was soon fast asleep. He slept soundly till the sun rose again behind the mountain peaks. And then he was awakened by the sound of children at play. He got out of bed to find a little boy and a girl running about the house. He thought they must be the neighbours’ children and the old people had probably gone to work in the fields. But when he asked the children who they were, they laughed merrily and answered that they were the old couple. The young man was thoroughly confused.

The children informed him that this was how their world worked. In the morning they are children. By midday they grow up into adults. In the evening they are old. But by the following morning they are children again. In this way they live on for ever.

The young Lepcha spent seven very happy days in the valley. He roamed around, enjoying the beautiful scenery. He saw a whole forest of trees with blue-green needles and golden bark. And morning and evening he saw large flocks of white birds winging their way across the sky. At the end of seven days the old woman told the young Lepcha that he must return to his world as no ordinary human was allowed to live in Mayel.

The old woman gave him the seeds of several different kind of grains as gifts. She said that if those seeds are sown in the village then his people would always have plenty to eat. But they should be sown at a proper time. The young man asked how would he know which would be the great time. Just then a flock of white birds flew past them. The old woman smiled. She said that they would send a flock of white birds as a signal for the apt time.

The Lepchas believe that this is how they came to have food grains. To this day when they see flocks of white birds, they know it is time for them to sow their crops. Once the sowing is over, they begin to pray to their ancestors in Mayel to send them a good harvest. ■

EXPRESSIONS

I remember vividly that day, it was no ordinary day.

Like a bride, the Main Road and streets decorated.

Hundreds of festoons high across the roads, flags fluttering.

Filled with green everywhere, no other colour.

Not a single corner empty but filled with green in plenty.

It was because of an old bruise and suffocation, freedom everybody wished.

Revolution had slowly begun, slow was its pace.

Far and untouched Darjeeling wanted to stay, not under Bengal's colonial rule.

The scenario now changed, no dance, no clap.

With procession long and winding, in the best attire the people moved.

With enthusiasm the century old demand was raised as they increased their pace.

With cries of freedom and slogans the flags were waved.

Suddenly there was firing, shots came from everywhere.

Behold the innocent dropped down dead.

Helter-skelter the people ran, some limping, some screaming.

With stomachs open and entrails on the road, people groaned, crawling.

Some lay down with heads battered, others with hearts shattered, the road was bloody.

Ran and chased as excited they were, shooting and killing.

Ah! The bloody massacre of innocent civilians, stop me please, I can't write more.

O Bengal, thank you, a unique gift and reward you gave.

Justice you have given with a bullet in our chest.

Feeling of fraternity you have none, but forces you sent to slaughter and destroy.



With garlands welcome your valiant forces, with medals honor them.

The victory was not yours but ours.

How merciless and cruel were they to shoot them dead.

Wriggling and bleeding they must have fallen cold and dead.

They will not rise anymore but raise our spirit,

Recollecting the saga of sacrifice for the supreme cause, I walked dissatisfied with their death.

With my head low, I walked slow with a mournful tread.

Sacrifice they have made by offering their lives for our paramount cause.

I salute them today and everyday and pay obeisance.

Sorrow will I express and mourn their passing.

Memorials are erected, in golden words their names engraved.

My heart sink when I think of that day, the unforgettable day – 27th July 1986.

Today with bouquets and wreaths, thousands have gathered to commemorate "Martyrs Day".

To pay tribute, endless line, before the memorial stood.

Silently waiting for their turn but looking around, I felt, even the nature mourned.

To you great souls, we paid homage, observed silence and prayed.

I had mourned before, I shall mourn every time with the return of this day.

Now they are dead and gone but will live forever.

They have become martyrs, generations will remember.

Their blood will unite us, lead us to new frontiers.

Their blood will liberate us from the shackles of tyranny.

And fulfill our aspiration and attain our goal – GORKHALAND.

THE LIVING LEGEND- URGEN LAMA MINI-THE POCKET DYNAMITE

Born in the year 1953 to Late K.D Lama and Late Narmada Devi Lama, Urgen Lama (Mini) had started his footballing journey in the year 1969 when he was called up to play for his school team, Scottish University Mission Institution (SUMI), Kalimpong. He was just sixteen years of age then. He had no other footballers in the family and it was his self-interest and passion for the game along with the claps and adulation showered by the people which inspired him to play football. His father was a classical singer and a very well known figure.

In the year 1971 a team from West Sikkim hired him to play in a tournament and it was here he got the nick name "Mini". A local newspaper had carried his story and they had called him Mini. Which remains till date as I found out that very few people know his real name even in his home town. 1974 was a turning point in his career as he received an invitation from the King of Bhutan to play for their National team. So Mini without a second thought packed his bags and left for Bhutan. He also got a job there and started playing for the National Team. Mostly they travelled to India and participated in almost all the major tournaments like the Durand Cup, DCM Trophy and the Bordoli Trophy. During the Gorkha Gold Cup in Darjeeling in the year 1977 he won the Best Player Award. He stayed in Bhutan till 1981 and in his last year there he helped the team with his exceptional performance to win the Shillong Invitational Cup. He had got a wide media coverage then. In 1979 he also played a season with the Kolkata side Bharati Sangha.

After coming back to Kalimpong for a brief while Mini joined the Kolkata giants Mohammedan Sporting Club in 1982 and gave an impressive performance in the Kolkata League along with the All India Governor's Gold Cup in Sikkim. The very next year he took his performance even further and was awarded the Best Player's Trophy in the All India Governor's Gold Cup.



1983 was a sad year for Mini as he lost his mother but he never kept himself away from Football. He took an offer from Sikkim to be their coach cum player and went on to play seven Santosh Trophy tournaments. During his stay in Sikkim he met a young and budding footballer back then, Bhaichung Bhutia. He was posted in Namchi during those days and Bhaichung's School team coach Manas Chakraborty had requested Mini to coach the team during one of the winter breaks as the School team had no practice during this period. He had found Bhaichung to be very skillful and disciplined. Years later after becoming the star of Indian Football, Bhaichung had not forgotten "Mini Daju" as he invited him for his wedding. He also narrated an incident, all his friends were jostling to take a picture with Bhaichung at the wedding but he felt a bit shy to ask Bhaichung to click a picture with him so he just sat there. But Bhaichung himself came and asked the Photographer to click him with Mini Daju (Elder brother in Nepali). All the other guests and friends looked at him and he felt a sense of pride as the icon of Indian football himself was interested to take a picture with him.

Mini also narrates a couple of other interesting and funny incidents. He could not recall the year of this incident but it was at a tournament in Biratnagar (Nepal). Shayam Thapa had put together a team which included Thapa himself along with Pem Dorjee and other star players of those days. They had reached the finals after playing four matches and a day before the final match their striker had fallen sick and Shayam Thapa asked Mini to join the team in his place.

So he travelled to Biratnagar from Kalimpong, quite a long journey and headed straight to the ground. He gave a wonderful performance, even scored a goal and also bagged the man of the match award along with the best player of the tournament by just playing one game. So we can imagine how well he must have played because this is an amazing feat for any level of football. He added later with a smile that Pem Dorjee was the favorite to win these two trophies. Another incident was in Sikkim when he had gone to meet the then Sports Minister P.S Golay. He

met his personal secretary and filled up the visitors slip with his name. But even after two hours the minister did not call him to his room. So he asked the personal secretary to remind the minister that someone was waiting for him. The minister himself came out of his chamber asking who was Urgen Lama?. He got up to wish him. The minister smiled at him and said you should have wrote "Mini" in the slip and said sorry to him and ushered him to his chamber.

Mini's contribution to football has not been recognized by the Government till date as he has not received any awards or honors. But he has no complains. He is just happy that he played the beautiful game and people still talks about his playing days. Even I found this out as whenever I mentioned the name "Mini" in Kalimpong the people responded with "Oh what a wonderful player he was" He still plays for the Kalimpong United Veterans team and according to my friend he still troubles the defenders who are much younger to him. I think he considers this as the greatest honor, the people's love and affection towards him. So next time when you go to Kalimpong and a match is on at Mela ground and you see a short stature player running into defenders you can bet nine out of ten times that the person is Mini. ■

Article courtesy:
LateyBhakundo



THE COOKING DIARIES

Prakriti Prabha Chettri

Going out of town has its own perks! Lush greenery, trees dotted with spring flowers, peace and tranquility that one gets to spend hours doing absolutely nothing but just soaking in what nature has to offer to you. Mountain Hut a resort with a lovely restaurant at Barboat, a 5 minutes drive from town is the place to go if you want to fill in your senses with rustic contentment and free yourself from the monotonous drill of everyday life. Run by a pair of brother in laws Abhi Pradhan and Piyush Agarwal Mountain Hut spells Serenity.

As I entered the driveway leading to this divine place I couldn't help but be mesmerized. The fringes of the lawn were covered with larkspurs and Impassions and a lawn umbrella stood near a crapematyre tree with comfortable cane benches under it. On exploring further there was a few authentic nepali huts and a pretty pond which had a bamboo bridge over it. The garden below the huts was studded with guava and orange trees. It was love at first sight!!

Piyush served me a pink mocktail perfectly chilled with chicken fries, alu chops and lamb chops. I must confess here that the alu chops were the best I had ever had and the lamb chops were a delightful surprise as many eating outlets don't have lamb or mutton on

THE COOKING DIARIES

their menu. On top of that the lamb chops had a mysterious hint of flavor which I couldn't detect and piyush wouldn't reveal. (darn you, Piyush) but I guess we all are allowed to keep some secrets to our selves.

What was unique about this place is that they don't have a menu as such. Almost anything can be prepared according to what you would like to have given, that you place your order before hand. Similarly on my request Piyush had prepared butter chicken and palao as well as mutton curry and jeera rice at his own interest and will (Piyush loves cooking to the core of his soul). Along with it were a lovely fresh cucumber salad and cheese and pineapple picks and dal. The butter chicken was amazing, the chicken being baked in an oven first if not the tandoor and cooked with the most delicious spices and blended nuts. The mutton was equally wonderful, very well cooked without being heavy or greasy.

And as the birds chirped amidst the orange trees and drangon flies buzzed in sweet harmony I realized how lucky I was to be with nature and yet have luxury of a cozy cushioned benches with my bare feet grazing upon the cool green grass and eating such wonderful food with such wonderful company. It was indeed a rare treat!!

Till my next invite....

Bon appetite



RECALLING KALIMPONG



Dr. Sonam B. Wangyel

FOOTBALL: KALIMPONG STYLE

The game of football officially came to Kalimpong in 1910. The players played bare-feet and the teams did not necessarily have eleven players. To wear watches and steel rings around the wrist was a minor matter since carrying small knives and even khukuris were not deemed illegal. Later on when boots were introduced the players added stud-like nails to the soles. A good game then meant a good amount of blood spilled. All said and done, the team supporters were chaotic, the players tough and itching for a brawl, and the Mela Ground nothing short of a war zone. It was just a matter of time before someone went straight from the playing field to the cremation grounds. The danger was real and to add order and respectability (sanity?) to the game the Kalimpong Football Association (popularly known then as KFA) was formed and anything harmful, besides the regular football wear, was banned. But there were some things the KFA could do little about and so the free use of fists and hard-toed boots always left some blood on the grounds: the combat gear was removed but the gore remained. Times were rough and tough and the players played it tough and rough. Despite all the rules KFA imposed at the end of the long whistle it was not uncommon to see the referee beating it, post haste, up the Mela ground to the Motor Stand and straight home lest the losing side scrape some of his thick hide. Yes, referees then must have really been thick for if the losing side did not vent its anger then the public was always at hand. There were numerous occasions when the angry spectators invaded the ground, even while the game was on, and thrash the daylights

out of the referee(s). Thick hide? Yes, for the next day or sometime later the same referee(s) would be back on Mela Ground, blowing his whistle to the curses and hooting of the public.

As a school boy I recall the late Mr. Dipsingh Fonring always riding a horse up the Dr.



Photo: Sandip C. Jain

Graham's Homes' steep incline and in one encounter he asked me if I played the game. This huge gentleman had such an overpowering personality that my knees became wobbly and I meekly replied, "A little." He was pleased that I was not a regular kicker of the ball and told me why. In his days much before the game commenced targets would be fixed and a few players were specifically ordered to injure the better players of the opposing side. It did not matter if the opponent had the ball or not and all it required was that he be in the vicinity of the ball and "Wham!" one kick on the shin and the opposition was one less in count. I stared at the towering personality, as tough and steady as a papal tree, and silently thanked God that the small amount of football that I played was not in his times. That's the way it was then. Normally a day before the match the players would hit the dingy tongba and rakshi joints, 'charge' themselves and march around the town, in full uniform, soliciting support from the townsfolk. Just prior to the match they would 'recharge' themselves and 'spiritually' strengthened they would do the match, the

tactical strength generally being a good amount of brawn and plenty of booze.

Somewhere around 1925-27 the games became so violent that they resembled gladiatorial encounters rather than sporting events. Football then had to be banned for several years. (I often wonder what would have happened if Kalimpong had taken after hockey. Twenty-two men each armed with a lethal hooked stick! It would have been a mayhem! No wonder hockey never took off in Kpg.) In the first few decades of the twentieth century, the gladiatorial years, Kalimpong's football heroes were those who could kick the ball highest or the furthest. People would gather at the kitchen fireside and tell their children of these heroes, "Ramay kicked the ball all the way to the masu-dokan, ammamma!" This prowess was utilized not just for the gallery but the ball would be shot beyond the masu-dokan to the forests nearby in order to waste time. If a team was winning by a goal or two then the winning team would repeatedly kick the ball as far to the jungle as possible and thus gain time. People think that the wasting time is a pretty new phenomenon acquired from the west. I think not: it was there in Kalimpong long before it became popular in Europe. Anyway, in the first half of 1930s a system of keeping a timekeeper was introduced and he would record all the minutes and seconds willfully wasted. At the end of the game the lost time was added on and it is quite amazing to think that Kalimpong football had "Time-added" system in the 1930s because for the rest of the world this a very recent development. All I can say is "Ammamma, hogi!"



Durpin Monastery (Zang Dhok Palri Monastery) the time it was
being constructed in the year 1974

Happy Independence Day



**“Freedom has its life in the hearts,
the actions, the spirit of men...”**

HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY!